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Chinatown Community Plan
for Business and Economic Development
STRATEGIC ACTIONS

11/16/1988

GOVDOC

BRA

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- I. Design and adopt a community entrepreneurship development program. This should entail marketing research, technical know-how in planning and running a business, financial resources, and affordable space.
- Specifically targeting the opportunities and resources provided through the K/B parcel-to-parcel project, the Commonwealth Center project, and the Boston Crossing:
 - * Explore the Neighborhood Businesses Opportunities provisions in the Midtown Cultural District Zoning plan and the Chinatown Zoning Plan
 - * Explore the MBE opportunities provided through the Boston Job Policy requirements
 - * Explore innovative approaches, such as
 - a. Urban entrepreneurship development program for inner city residents modeled by the Council for Economic Action¹, including marketing survey, tutoring courses on business skills, and follow-up assistance;
 - b. Retail incubator for proprietors;
 - c. Business incubator for professional enterprises.
- II. Develop and adopt a strategic job development program for Chinatown community. This program should entail construction and other development-related jobs, permanent jobs, and related job and language training.
- Specifically targeting:
 - * Construction and development-related jobs coming on line such as the K-B project to serve as catalyst and leading to subsequent participation in other projects;
 - * Permanent jobs in projects where the developer is also the tenant, such as the Boston Crossing project;
 - * Major public projects, such as the Central Artery project;

1. The Council is headed by James M. Howell, chief economist at the Bank of Boston. The model has been adopted in at least 11 cities in the U.S.

- * Multiple entries in employment hierarchy; and
- * Opportunities for career development.

III. Develop a long-term economic diversification program for Chinatown, including tourism, trade businesses, cultural industry, medical reserch and manufacturing, and other possibilities that are keyed into the labor characteristics of the Chinatown community and the unique marketing potentials of Chinatown.

- Growth industry for training and retraining of community labor force
- Job locations easily accessible by public transits or where alternative transportation can be provided

IV. Design and adopt a commercial revitalization program to improve and maintain the business environment and public realms in Chinatown. This program could include streetscape, building facades, signages/flags, public arts, planting, street lighting, seating and other street furnitures.

Other Support Actions A community development fund as a generic funding mechanism by the BRA, in conjunction with the Kingston-Bedford/Essex Street parcel-to-parcel project. The community development fund is proposed as a means to capitalize the public benefits of private development to and direct them to community needs, such as affordable housing, commercial building and renovation, and minority business enterprise development services.

Over \$18 million in funds is expected to be channeled from the K-B development to Chinatown and Roxbury through the proposed community development fund. In addition, the development team has offered a \$100,000, one-to-one matching challenge grant to be shared by the Chinatown community and the Roxbury community in planning the uses of the community development fund.



NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Critical Needs

Aside from preserving and expanding existing businesses, Chinatown needs to upgrade and diversify its economic base through entrepreneurship and new businesses. At the same time, the rich and animated commercial environs that is distinctive of Chinatown must be reinforced. And, small scale neighborhood businesses and services that are the backbone of the Chinatown community need to be protected from displacement.

Critical areas to address:

I. Preserve and Expand Small Businesses

- 3/4 of businesses have fewer than 10 employees
- 1/2 of businesses have fewer than 5 employees
- 2,835 average square feet
- 650 sq. ft. personal/professional services
- 800 sq. ft. shops
- 3,800 sq. ft. restaurants
- 6,600 sq. ft. supermarkets/wholesale

- \$15 average rent per square foot; \$30-40 for prime locations; negative rents for some spaces in the Combat Zone. Two-thirds of businesses have experienced an increase in rent during the past five years.

- Lower Washington Street is a new growth area where there are currently 40 Asian businesses.

Special Needs:

1. Protect small businesses from being priced out by upscale establishments as a result of downtown development.
2. Provide opportunities for small businesses to expand into surrounding districts such as lower Washington Street.
3. Preserve mix of businesses to maintain attraction of Chinatown for tourists and visitors and to serve community needs.

II. Reinforce and Diversify Economic Base

In order for the community to grow and prosper, efforts must be made to ensure that its economic base is diversified to include non-traditional businesses.

- One-half of businesses opened within last six years.

- Grocery stores are the most stable, while restaurants have the highest rate of turnover.
- A large percentage of personal and professional services are relatively new.
- Marked increase in gift shops, jewelry stores, and Vietnamese restaurants.

Seize opportunities for economic development in:

1. Continued growth of Asian Community
2. Midtown Cultural District
3. Construction of major public projects and real estate development in downtown

Additional economic control needs to be built up through equity participation and community-based development corporations.

III. Support Business and Entrepreneurship Development

The existing business community and underlying support network provide a critical foundation for continued development and expansion of existing and new ventures.

Further measures of technical and financial assistance in the following areas are needed:

1. Marketing, business planning, management, and financing.
2. Programs should address special needs of youths, immigrants and financially disadvantaged among aspiring entrepreneurs.
3. Gaining space in downtown retail and business center.
4. Exploration of opportunities in incubator space, and franchises.
5. Workshops on ~~architecture and design styles~~.

*building/design prototypes for
expansion and large scale
businesses.*

ZONING PROVISIONS

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

SMALL BUSINESS EXPANSION AREA

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

Thresholds

? 3,000 GSF USE SIZE ON GROUND FLOOR

? FRONTAGE LIMITATION ON GROUND FLOOR

EXISTING BUSINESS EXPANSION ON-SITE

NEW BUSINESS

